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Chester Jenks and his Troubles.

BY JOHN THORNBERRY.

"Come, Chester," said his friend Tom Whiting, "get your duds together and go out to B. to-morrow. I've got plenty of friends there, you know, and I want you to enjoy some of them with me; especially Miss Mary Maxwell."

"O, *pho!*" answered Chester Jenks sticking his heels up on the window-sill.

"I tell you there's no '*pho*' about it. Mary is a beautiful girl. She's in the way of a handsome inheritance, too. And I think, what's more that you would like her, and she would like you. Come, now; she'd like an author, and you might not dislike an heiress. I insist upon it that you shall go!"

"If you were only going too," said Chester.

"That's just the reason why I want you to start off ahead of me, you see. I'd rather you would be there alone and study character a little for yourself, and then I shall come along and look over your conclusions. The fact is, if you get acquainted with Mary Maxwell without any interference of *mine*, it may be a great deal better for you, and for her, too."

Chester Jenks began to think seriously of it.

"You need fresh air and a change of scene," urged his friend Tom, "and B. is exactly the place for you. Go right off to-morrow, I tell you, and not say another word about it.—I shall be there as soon as you will care about seeing me. The fact is, I've a wonderful fancy that you and my friend Mary are going to just suit one another. At any rate, I want to be satisfied about it whether I am right or wrong."

Chester Jenks was over-persuaded. It was a lovely day in late June; summer was throwing her charms around everything. And the image of beautiful Mary Maxwell danced through his thoughts. Next morning he set out bright and early for the cars, carpet-bag in hand. His spirits were high. and all things promised happiness.

It was late in the afternoon before he reached B., and the last part of his journey he was obliged to perform by stagecoach. As he drove up under the great elm tree that shadowed the roof of the village tavern, he thought the spot the most inviting and rural he had ever seen. B. was entitled to a fixed place in his heart already, for nothing but the promises it seemed to hold out.

Having placed his carpet-bag in safe keeping, he found it would be some time yet before supper; so, on consulting his feelings, he concluded that he would find his way down to the river's bank below the village street, and indulge in a democratic wash; in other words, a good plunge and swim. Tired and dusty as he was, he started off on his hygienic errand, hoping to feel in excellent trim for his supper.

Perhaps a half mile or more from the street he saw a beautiful little nook, bending in from the river's bank, where he thought his good luck invited him. He turned down to it, and found himself wholly concealed from the road, and from every ordinary chance of detection and disturbance. Disrobing himself as quick as he could, he laid his clothes in a secure place and plunged in.

Just about the same instant that he took his delicious plunge in the June waters of the little river, a stranger of about his own size had been caught filching sundry articles of household economy from the dwellings of the good house wives in the village, and had started off in headless haste down the street, at the cry which was set up of "*stop thief!*" He darted away at such speed that no one thought there was much use in pursuing him, though they had so carefully marked his dress and appearance that they knew they would recognize him should he turn up again.

The fellow was frightened nearly to death. He felt certain he should be caught, and knew already that people must have started across the country to head him off by the route he had taken. Trembling and uncertain what to do, he plunged into the thicket by the roadside, and came pat upon the heap of clothes only a few minutes before vacated by our friend, Chester Jenks.

"Well, if here aint a prize!" he exclaimed to himself, lifting both hands. "I couldn't ask anything more to my mind!"

And without a single moment's delay, he proceeded to put off his own clothes, and to put on the respectable suit he found lying near him. Of course his next move was one as far distant as possible from that locality. He struck out a path across the fields, unwilling to trust his person on the highway until night should kindly come down and throw her protecting mantle over him.

In due time, Mr. Chester Jenks had completed his tumblings and curvettings, his swashings and washings in the river, and took himself out of the current to the privacy of his chosen boudoir in the bushes. He dried off carefully, and he rubbed himself vigorously with the crash-towel he had brought in his carpet-bag. "Ah," said he aloud, when he was wholly through, "*now* I feel like another person! I feel clean! I feel fresh and new! If I could only have the good luck to see Mary Maxwell as soon as I get through my supper, 'twill be as near what I should like as anything could be!"

Thereupon he fell to, to dress himself again. He picked up his shirt; yes, *that* was still there, and it fitted him. No suspicions excited yet. He seized his drawers. *They* were all right. And still no misgiving. He grabbed at his trousers, and had fairly poked into one leg of them, when a cry of dismay escaped him.

"Great George of Oxford!" he called. "What is all this?"

Quicker than a wink, he had drawn off the trousers' leg, and was holding up the entire article for inspection! His face was a long picture of despair without a frame.

He reached down and poked over the remaining items of his wardrobe; they were no more his than the trousers were his that he held in his hand. They looked thoroughly dingy, cheap, uninviting, and unclean. They were not the clothes of a decent gentleman at all, but rather the rig of some villainous pack-pedler.

What to do,—was the momentous question. The conclusion was plain, stern as it was, likewise. There was no possible alternative but for him to put on these clothes at his hand, and temporarily make the best of it. Perhaps there was a clothing-store in the village, and he would shed his skin there as soon as he could find it. But it was with a sickening qualm at his stomach that he slipped the garments on so gingerly. He thought he should have preferred to wash them out in the river first, but how could he wait for them to dry?

On they went, therefore, and on he went by a back and unfrequented way to the villag again. He looked and acted guilty enough. Even a child might have suspected him to be a thief.

He climbed over garden walls, crept through barn-yards and cattle-lanes, sneaked round the shortest corners he could turn, and arrived at the hotel the stagecoach originally landed him. The moment he made his appearance in the hall, the landlord, who had first espied him from the next room, sprang up from the knot of men he was chatting with on the subject of thief, and rushed upon him.

"I've got you *now*, you villain!" he cried. "I *knew* you'd be crawling back after your carpet-bag, and here you are! Come into the other room here!"

Before he could recover from his surprise, Chester Jenks found himself suddenly dragged into the midst of a party of excited men, every one of whom loudly charged him with being a *thief*. He was so confused at first, that he could not speak. And this they considered a certain symptom of his guilt. If the rascal were really innocent, he would out with it, fair and square. But how could such a guilty *looking* fellow help being really *guilty!*

"I am no *thief*, gentlemen," said he, "I am no more a thief than any one of you are."

"Who be you, then?" asked several at once.

Chester Jenks did not care to tell them that he was an industrious, hopeful, and aspiring young author; very few really promising young authors would have chosen to do so.

He therefore only told them what his name was, where he came from, and what he came out to B. for,—without mentioning the name of Mary Maxwell.

"Aha!" said they, "you needn't think to cheat us in *that* way! We've caught you, old feller, and we be'll we've caught a *thief!* You'll k.. more about it pretty soon!"

Met by such a torrent of accusation, the poor fellow thought it best to say as little as possible at present, and to await events.

Presently a justice of the peace entered, and at his back a couple of ladies, residents in the village. What was Chester Jenk's first great mortification, to hear the justice accosted on all sides as Squire Maxwell! It took the courage out of his heart in an instant.

"Look here, sir," said Squire M., to begin with, "you are charged by these women with entering their houses and taking goods of such and such a description. Are you guilty or not guilty?"

Chester began a long speech, but was cut short at the outset. They did not come there to hear long speeches, or any sort of speeches; but to see justice measured out to a rogue and robber.

While this was going forward, a constable had the thought to examine his coat pockets; and, sure enough, from one of them he fished up four silver spoons, with the initials of one of his female accusers quite legibly engraved upon them! They were held up as proof that he was the thief.

Whereupon Chester commenced an explanation of the manner in which he came not only by the spoons, but by the clothes also.

"A very likely story!" they all murmured, with a sneer, in his ears, "a likely story!"

The women testified both to the property as theirs, and to the identity of the prisoner. The landlord identified him as the same fellow who had come in the stagecoach only the same afternoon; and the few men who had vainly chased after him freely offered their testimony that this was the same fellow they had run out of town, and wore precisely the same clothes.

Could proof be more to the point? Chester Jenks continued to protest. He was laboring under a mingled sense of mortification and confusion, at finding himself arraigned as a criminal, and especially at having his case tried before the father of the very girl he had been so anxious to see. He thought of mentioning to Squire Maxwell the name of his friend Tom Whiting; but then, on second thought, why need he make himself known at all? It was already bad enough; could he hope to better it in this way? Still he did not cease for a moment to protest against the proceedings with all his present vigor; to declare himself an innocent person, and the victim of a foul conspiracy; and to insist that the very clothes he wore were not his own, but had been left him in exchange for those he laid on the river's bank while bathing. All, however, to worse than no purpose; for now they thought him not only an out-and-out thief, but a consummate liar in the bargain.

Esquire Maxwell, the father of the beautiful Mary, found him guilty in due course of law; and sentenced him to a fine of seven dollars, with costs, together with imprisonment in the county jail for thirty days. If he could not raise the amount of the fine, he was at perfect liberty to remain in limbo until he had worked it out.

A constable rode up with a smart horse to drive him off some six good miles to the place of his more permanent destination. Chester Jenks got into the wagon with an odd combination of feelings, with which the ludicrous was just beginning to get mixed up. He arrived at his quarters in safety, passed a sleepless night, and awoke in the morning with a determination to sit down and *do* something about it. Early in the forenoon, however, who should make his appearance in the county institution, but the man with *his* clothes on his back! The scamp had been pursuing his proclivities in another place and at this early hour in the day had managed to get his deserts. Before the face and eyes of the officer, Chester Jenks stood up and charged the vagabond with stealing his clothes while he was bathing. He appealed to him, now that he was caught at last, to tell the truth about the affair in B., and to secure his own release forthwith.

"O, that would be mighty nice, now, John, wouldn't it? Indeed it would, when we started on shares, you know, to begin with, and have both of us got to the same stopping place so early! O, no, my friend," said he, "you wouldn't desert a body in such a strait as *this*, I hope. We began together; let's carry it out to the end!"

Chester was stupified with the presumption of the scoundrel. It was of no profit for him to bandy words with such a fellow; he merely assured him that he should have a "bone to pick with him" in a few days, and relapsed into quietness. The first thing and the only thing for him to do, was to sit down and write a letter to his friend Tom Whiting in Boston. He told him what trouble he was in, and how he wanted him to come and help him. "Come on without an hour's delay," said he, "and bring Esquire Maxwell over to jail with you!"

Tom was thunderstruck with the news; and when he had recovered from his surprise a little, he broke out into one of the heartiest laughs he ever enjoyed. Off he posted at full speed, and, on the evening of the same day that he started, he was at the doors of the county jail. As soon as Chester had regained his liberty, he was introduced to Miss Mary Maxwell! Tom had whispered the secret of our friend's visit to B. in her ear, and insisted that she should accompany her father and himself over to the county-house to welcome the prisoner back to freedom again.—Chester was covered with confusion, but not so much so that he could not discern through it all the rare beauty and grace of the Squire's daughter Mary. He was a slave, the moment he was free!

The real thief's clothes were tried on him, in the presence of the Squire, the jailor, and others, and the fit was complete. He was tried again, for theft, and was sentenced for a respectable time—not to the county jail, simply, but to the State prison.

Thus sadly was the acquaintance of Chester Jenks with Mary Maxwell begun, in a jail; but it proved, after all, the most efficient introduction he could have had. Her father, having already done him such injustice ignorantly, hastened to show him friendship of no ordinary kind.—Mary first pitied, and next admired—no, admired isn't the word—him. And the result was, that he took up his residence in B. before long, and devoted all his time to the pursuit of his profession, and the happiness of his wife.

France and Her Ruler.

The last Edinburg *Review* contains an able analysis of the returns of the French empire. It shows that the population of France, during the last five years, has been stationary, and that while the towns and cities, Paris above all, have increased in population, the rural districts have been correspondingly depopulated. From these two facts it deduces several important conclusions. First, that the military power of France has reached its achme, as one chief cause of her great military importance, heretofore, has been in the large armies she could levy from her soil by conscription. Secondly, that the non-producing classes of France are increased while the agricultural peasantry are decreasing. Hence the high price of breadstuffs, which has caused the government, for several years, to feed the rabble of Paris, partly at its own expense. Thirdly, that as the population is found to increase only with the production of a nation, the decline of French agriculture foreshadows a decline of the numbers and power of the French people.

A Strange Adventure.—Mr. Redblossom drank more than his allowance of hot rum and sugar, one cold night last week; the consequence of which was, he gave his wife a rather confused account of his conduct on his return home:

"Mr. Smith's grocery invited me to go and drink Uuncle Sam—and you see the weather was dry, and I was very sloppy—so I said I didn't mind punching a drink—and it's queer how my head went into a punch, though! The way home was so dizzy that I slipped upon a little dog—the corner of the street bit me—and an old man with cropped ears and a big brass collar on his neck said he belonged to the dog!"

[From the N. Y. Herald.]

Kanzas Affairs---New Facts and Phases in the Controversy---What Next?

The last advices from Kanzas are very curious, very important, very suggestive and very ominous.

The Free State Legislature was in session at Topeka—Governor Walker and suite were there; but they had, it appears, discountenced all measures of violence against this so-called legislative body. It further appears that Governor Robinson had sent in his message, in which he contends that the Topeka constitution is the only clear expression of the popular will of Kanzas; thinks it incompetent for the neighboring States longer to exercise sovereignty in Kanzas, and declares it impossible for Free State men to vote at the bogus election. He concludes by saying he will maintain the position of resistance to usurped authority at all hazards and at all times.

Now, the first thing which strikes us, in reference to these remarkable transactions, is the nice distinction between the Kanzas policy of poor Pierce and the policy of Mr. Buchanan. Last summer, when this Free State Legislature was convened and the members were about proceeding to business, they were dispersed by the United States dragoons in violation of that sacred constitutional right of the people "peaceably to assemble together for the redress of public grievances." Mr. Buchanan, on the other hand, acknowledges the force of this popular right, and does not interfere to suppress it, but to uphold it. The Free State party, if it choose, may get up an imperial Parliament, and they may proclaim Governor Robinson the Emperor of Kanzas; for as long as such proceedings amount to nothing more than letting off the gas, there is no overt act of treason or rebellion or disorder. But the moment they shall attempt, by any act, to supersede the local laws or authorities recognized by the federal government, that moment the offending parties become justly liable to to a criminal arrest and prosecution.

The peace of Kanzas, therefore, during the summer, may depend upon the wisdom or the folly of Gov. Robinson and his Free State party. They may hold as many conventions, and get as many Legislatures and messages and remonstrances as they please against the *de facto* local laws and authorities in the Territory.—The local laws and authorities, *de facto*, it is the duty of the President to sustain, He must accept them as he finds them. He cannot go behind the record to see whether the local Legislature passing the laws in force was a genuine or a bogus concern.—The judicial power over this question belongs to another department of the government.

We should be sorry to have any reason for the impression that the Free State party of Kanzas, commanding a large majority of the people of the Territory, entertain any design of instigating another border war between themselves and the pro-slavery *de facto* local authorities.

We are rather inclined to the opinion that this Topeka Legislature is simply intended by the Free State leaders as the medium for the consolidation of their party organization in regard to future appeals to the popular vote. In this view there may be nothing more of mischief in these Topeka proceedings than in the factious pow-wows of Tammany Hall.

But the transfer of this local controversy from Kanzas to Congress, it is beginning to be stikingly self-evident, will inaugurate another and most fearful Congressional agitation of the whole question of slavery.—The Kanzas State constitution of the local party in power will be presented to the House and Senate *vis-a-vis* with the Topeka Free State charter and the remonstrances of the Free State party in every shape and form. Will the South be united in Congress, and can the Northern democrats of the House, elected upon Free State ideas, be relied upon by the South? We see that a purely sectional ultra Southern party is in process of formation throughout the South—we are aware, too, that there is a Union party in the South; and that upon the compromise measures of 1850, this Union party in 1851 completely whipped out the secessionists in a fair fight in South Carolina, Georgia and Mississippi. But the secession element was strongly developed again in 1856, and we apprehend now, from the signs of the times in Kanzas and in the South, that this ultra Southern element, from the agitation of the next Congress, will assume a still more palpable, definite and formidable shape.

The compromise acts of 1850 broke the backbone of the old Whig party—the Kanzas-Nebraska bill of 1854 broke the backbone of the old Democratic party—and from that day to this the political *debris* and loose party materials, North and South, have been in a state of confusion and effervesence. There was only a partial crystalization in 1856—nothing fixed or conclusive. That mushroom excrescence, the Know Nothing party, has since collapsed and broken down, and its fragments are all adrift. The prominent issue for the reconstruction of parties is Kanzas, and slavery or no slavery; and there is every indication that this issue will come up at Washington in December next, in such a shape as to result in a fierce agitation between two hostile sectional parties, and in the organization of a new conservative Union party, occupying the solid ground between these dangerous extremes. We don't know that this Kanzas coutroversy will be settled by the next Congress. We rather apprehend that it will be kept open for a year or two to come, until the middle ground Union men in Congress shall have gained the power to command a settlement.

Such are the comprehensive bearings of these late events in Kanzas in connection with the party movements of the day. Mr. Buchanan stands upon a rock; but the future—who shall speak for the future?

Gov. Walker in Virginia.

The Richmond *South* (democratic) publishes the following account of one of Gov. Walker's financial operations. It will interest our Territorial readers, who will naturally ask, "have we a swindler among us?"

When Robert J. Walker was Senator from Mississippi, he ascertained that an old gentleman in Middle county, in this State, was disposed to sell a large estate in negroes. Accordingly, in company with a colleague in the House of Representatives, Walker made the old gentleman a visit; and after a protracted negotiation succeeded in purchasing the slaves. And he got them on good terms, for the old gentleman—a devoted Democrat—was charmed by the graceful condescension of the distinguished Senator. The aggregate price of the negroes was something more than forty thousand dollars, for which Walker gave a note or draft payable in New Orleans.—But the old man would not sell his slaves except on condition that they were to be kept together on a plantation in the South.

Well, the slaves were taken to New Orleans, were put upon the block and dispersed to the four winds—the purchaser realizing a considerable profit by the "transaction."—The note or draft matured, was presented for payment, was protested, and from that day to the present time not a cent has been received either by the old gentleman or his heirs for fifty thousand dollars worth of negroes! Meanwhile Walker has lived in affluence, and is believed now to be a millionaire. Will some one of Walker's apologists impeach the correctness of this story? Let them try it. The substantial truth of the statement shall be verified by testimony which nobody can question.

But this is not an isolated instance. There were many such in Walker's career, of which the history may yet be written.

Juvenile Wit.—An old physician was declaring in our hearing the other day, upon the propensity which a majority of people display in eating unripe fruit and vegetables. Said he: "There is not a vegetable growing in our gardens that is not best when arrived at maturity, and most of them are positively injurious unless fully ripe."

"I know one thing that ain't so good when it's ripe as 'tis when it's green," interrupted a little boy, in a very confidential but modest manner.

"What's that?" sharply said the physician, vexed at having his principles disputed by a mere boy.

"A cucumber!" responded the lad.

The doctor winked at us with both eyes but said nothing.

☞You may gain knowledge by reading, but you must separate the wheat from the chaff by thinking.